

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 TRSE-00 /069 W

-----220833Z 035609 /17

R 220515Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 099

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USNATO

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 1242

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: OPINIONS DIFFER ON EXTENT OF COMMUNIST SPLIT

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 994, (B) STOCKHOLM 935, (C) STOCKHOLM 895

1. LEADER OF THE SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK) LARS WERNER AND SYMBOLIC HEAD OF THE NEW COMMUNIST WORKER'S PARTY (APK) ROLF HAGEL, WHO LED THE DISSIDENT DEFECTION FROM THE VPK IN MARCH (REF C), DISAGREED OVER THE WEEKEND ON THE IMPACT OF THE PRO-MOSCOW MOVEMENT ON SWEDISH COMMUNISM. THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO HAVE ABANDONED THE VPK REMAINS UNDETERMINED, THE ADVERSARIES TRADED CHARGES OF DECEPTION AND MADE WIDELY DIVERGING ESTIMATES OF THE EXTENT OF APK SUPPORT.

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2. IN A SPEECH IN GOTEBOG MARCH 18, WERNER MINIMIZED THE IMPACT OF THE SPLIT AND CLAIMED THAT ONLY 1,000 TO 1,500 VPK MEMBERS HAVE DEFECTED TO THE APK, WHILE THE VPK HAS RECEIVED OVER 300 NEW MEMBERS SINCE THE BREAK. WERNER AND THE VPK ESTIMATE THAT THEIR LOSS WILL BE ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL 16,000 - 17,000 MEMBERSHIP, AND COUNT ON RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT NEW SUPPORT. DESCRIBING

HAGEL'S FIGURES FOR APK SUPPORT AS 'TOTALLY FALSE,' PARTY SECRETARY TORE FORSBERG CALLED THE APK'S BREAK WITH THE MAIN PARTY A 'FIASCO,' WHILE A LOCAL GOTEBORG LEADER CLAIMED THAT ONLY 66 LOCAL MEMBERS HAVE LEFT THE PARTY AND THAT THE GOTEBORG DISTRICT, MEANWHILE, HAS SIGNED UP 102 NEW MEMBERS. WERNER REPEATED HIS LINE THAT THE VPK WILL BE POLITICALLY STRONGER ONCE RID OF INTERNAL STRIFE, AND PREDICTED THAT THE PARTY WILL EASILY REACH THE 4 PERCENT MARGIN REQUIRED FOR RIKSDAG REPRESENTATION IN THE NEXT ELECTION. HE ADDED THAT HE IS SURE THAT 'GROUPS OF MEMBERS WHO HAVE LEFT THE VPK WILL GET IT AND WANT TO RETURN.'

3. THE NEXT DAY, HAGEL DERIDED THE VPK ESTIMATE OF HIS SUPPORT AS A 'DECEPTION' BEFORE A GATHERING OF APK SUPPORTERS IN GOTEBORG, AND PROCLAIMED THAT 4,600 MEMBERS HAVE FLOCKED TO THE APK BANNER, A THIRD OF THE VPK MEMBERSHIP. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, ABOUT 450 PEOPLE HEARD HAGEL SPEAK, AND AN APK SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS CLOSE TO THE APK'S ESTIMATE OF 500 DEFECTORS TO THE APK FROM THE GOTEBORG DISTRICT.

4. THE FIRST FORMAL CONFERENCE OF THE APK WILL BE HELD MARCH 26-27 IN STOCKHOLM, AT WHICH TIME THE LEADERSHIP WILL BE ELECTED. THE MAJOR CONTENDERS FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP ARE HAGEL AND FORMER NORBOTTEN CHAIRMAN ALF LOWENBORG, WHO IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE APK DECLARATION. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHO WILL BE CHOSEN, THOUGH LOWENBORG, WHO ACCORDING TO APK FIGURES IS UNCLASSIFIED

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BRINGING SOME 1,500 MEMBERS INTO THE NEW PARTY, WILL CERTAINLY BE VERY INFLUENTIAL REGARDLESS OF HIS FORMAL POSITION.

5. COMMENT: MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPORT GRAVITATING TO THE APK, AND MANY EXPECT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THE DUST CLEARS. HAGEL'S CLAIM THAT THE APK ALREADY HAS 4,600 MEMBERS WAS NO DOUBT INFLATED IN THE PASSION OF THE MOMENT, JUST AS WERNER IS APPARENTLY DOWNPLAYING THE VPK'S LOSSES; THE 'BEST GUESS' FOR NOW APPEARS TO BE NO MORE SPECIFIC THAN 'SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN.'

SMITH

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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